5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

but before I had time to cock one I was jumped upon from behind by some half-dozen of these monsters. One of them grasping a pistol by the barrel, I pointed it to his head and pulled the trigger. It missed fire, and I thank God that it did! Its discharge would have certainly killed him, and would as certainly have been revenged upon my life, probably upon the lives of my comrades. This is easily felt and said now; but at the moment, when excited by the struggle for liberty, and, as I feared, for life, with such dreaded enemies and at such formidable odds, it was quite another matter.

The old chief now came up, took me firmly by the wrist, and said, "Usted no bono! usted habla varmano por me casa, mucho, mala hombre currarhae! mucho montaro hombre!"—by which specimen of choice Spanish he desired to inform me that we promised to go to their houses, and now would not go; that we were bad men and liars. His peculiarly thick and guttural pronunciation did not make the dialect more intelligible; but I was in a situation where criticism would have been rather out of place, and my ears were quickened by the revelations made to sight. I therefore promptly replied, that if he would restrain his men from violence, we would go where he pleased. They, meanwhile, grasped their knives, and looked as if they wanted to use them on our persons; but the chief told them, No, *not then;* he would get rum and tobacco for us first, and kill us afterwards. Whilst I was thus engaged, my nearest companion discovered his gun in the hands of an Indian who stood not far from where I was struggling. Rushing suddenly upon him, he succeeded in recovering his piece,—more by tact than force, for his antagonist, like all the

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

holding on better than the others, and I hoped she would ride out the gale in safety.

I made my captors understand the reason why no boat had come, as promised; with which they appeared to be satisfied, and we returned as we came. By means of their broken Spanish, which they had picked up from sailors, and in visits to the Chilian or other Spanish American settlements, and by signs, amounting at times pretty nearly to a pantomime, I found myself able to understand inquiries or commands, and to make known my wishes.

Early on the following morning we again visited the shore, and I looked eagerly toward the anchorage, where all my hopes of deliverance centred. Not a vessel was in sight! Whether they had foundered, or were driven upon the shoal and wrecked, or had dragged out to sea in a disabled condition, — or whether my shipmates, the gale having subsided, had deliberately proceeded on their voyage, and left me a prey to cruel savages and all the ills of this inhospitable shore, — I was unable to conjecture. I only knew that they were gone, and that I was left alone to the tender mercies of the Patagonians. No present means of escape appeared. The future, wisely hidden from my view, suggested none to my imagination. I told my captors the worst; that the high winds had probably sunk the ships, and all that were in them. At this intelligence they seemed delighted, and laughed immoderately, as if such a calamity were a consolation for the loss of their expected ransom. Their cruel glee could add nothing to the weight of my desolation. My past life was sealed up as if by an entrance on a new state